Appointment of US Firms as agents by STC

*135. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN:
DR. R. K PODDAR:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation from the Indian Jute Mills Association and the Calcutta Jute Fabrics Shippers Association on the appointment of some US firms as Agents by the State Trading Corporation to market jute goods in the United States; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI DINESH SINGH). (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) STC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with M/s. Cooperatives Business International and M/s. Universal Cooperatives of the USA for promotion of exports of hessian and jute carpet backing cloth in the US. In the representations received, it was apprehended that the arrangement entered into by STC would jeopardise existing established lines of trade of Jute goods with USA.

However, the arrangement for consignment sales envisaged in the MOU, are in accordance with the rules laid down by the Reserve Bank of India and will help in boosting exports of hessian and jute carpet backing cloth to the United States. Moreover, the arrangement is not an exclusive one and does not interfere with the existing channels of trade.

News-item captioned "Poor nations face food emergency'"

*136. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD:
SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report of the Washington based "World Watch Institute" as published in the Hindustan Times dated January 16, 1989 under the caption "Poor nations face 'food emergency'" and calling for global efforts to avert environmental destruction and other human induced climatic changes that threaten to undermine the future of humanity; and

(b) if so, what specific steps are being taken to avert the threatened situation?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The steps taken by the Government of India to avert the threatened situation of environmental degradation and human induced climate change include the following:

(i) Survey and protection of forests, afforestation programmes and wasteland development.

(ii) Soil conservation, protection of watershed areas, flood control, anti-drought and anti-desertification measures, and protection of the quality of land.

(iii) Conservation of water and prevention and control of water pollution.

(iv) Prevention and control of air pollution.

(v) Measures for the development of non-conventional energy sources.

(vi) Measures for conservation of energy; and

(vii) Participation in international efforts to meet the situation.

Silent Valley Project in Kerala

137. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:
SHRI HARI SINGH:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has informed the Kerala Government that it will not entertain any proposal for the revival of the Silent Valley project; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) and (b) The Silent Valley is a unique eco-system rich in biological diversity and has been declared as a national park. It also forms the core zone of the Nilgiri biosphere reserve. In response to a representation made by the Society for Protection of Silent Valley, Calicut, against the intended revival of the Silent Valley Project, the State Government has, therefore, been advised in October, 1988 that the question of reviving the proposal does not arise.

Smuggling of Indian Currency of High Denomination

138. SHRI MOHAMMED AMIN:
SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Indian currency of high denomination is being smuggled out to facilitate for the smuggling of gold, etc.;

(b) if so, what is the appropriate value of the Indian currency involved in such smuggling; and

(c) what action has been taken to curb such activity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) and (b) Available reports and the seizure of the Indian currency effected by the Customs authorities during the last few yaers as shown in the table below indicate that Indian currency continues to be sensitive to smuggling High denomination notes like Rs. 500|- and Rs. 100|- continue to be smuggled out of the country as they are convertible in the curreny markets of Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong etc. into Foreign Exchange. After such conversion, the amount is used for financing inward smuggling of contraband goods like gold, silver, synthetic textiles, watches etc.

	Value Rs. in crores		
	1986	*1987*	*1988*
Seizures of Indian Currency	5674	4.36	6.72

However, since smuggling is a clandestine activity, it is not possible to estimate the amount of Indian currency being smuggled into or out of the country at any particular time.

(c) The anti-smuggling drive has been intensified and the anti-smuggling machinery particularly in the vulnerable areas of the land borders and the coastline and the International airports and seaports has been geared up. Intelligence is targetted against smugglers including